

ARMY FAMILY ACTION PLAN

The Voice of the Army Family”



1-5 June 2009 Weinheim, Germany

ARMY FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Work Group I Force Support

Spokesperson: Charity Smith

Top 3 Issues

1. Temporary Duty with Return for Warrant Officer Course/Officer Candidate School Attendees from Outside the Continental United States
2. Army Physical Fitness Test Requirements for Retention and Reclassification of Current and Former Warrior Transition Unit Soldiers
3. Lack of Standardized Training within the Army Weight Control Program

Temporary Duty (TDY) with Return for Warrant Officer Course (WOC)/Officer Candidate School (OCS) Attendees from OCONUS

Scope: Family members whose Sponsor attends WOC and OCS while TDY en-route from an OCONUS duty station maintain their OCONUS logistical support at the duty station for no more than 90 days after the Soldier's departure. Periods over 90-days require a request for exception to policy as described in AER 600-700, Table 11-1, to the NATO/SOFA Office (ECJ1-CEA-NS), Office of the Provost Marshal, HQ USAREUR/7A. Without an exception to policy, which is not an option afforded by every sponsoring agency, Families frequently undergo multiple relocations often at their own expense. If the sponsor's orders authorize TDY with return, the spouse maintains logistical support at the duty station during the TDY, allowing Families to remain stabilized.

Recommendation: Authorize TDY with return to originating duty station for all OCONUS WOC/OCS Candidates.

Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) Requirements for Retention and Reclassification of Current and Former Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) Soldiers

Scope: Current and former WTU Soldiers are often unable to remain in the Army due to their inability to meet the APFT standards. In accordance with Training and Doctrine Command regulations, WTU Soldiers who are medically unable to complete the required aerobic APFT event are ineligible for reclassification and retention. Permanently waiving APFT requirements for WTU Soldiers allows them to continue to serve, retaining valuable leadership skills, experience and knowledge for the Army.

Recommendation: Permanently waive APFT requirements for retention and reclassification of current and former WTU Soldiers who cannot complete the aerobic portion.

Lack of Standardized Training within the Army Weight Control Program (AWCP)

Scope: The current implementation of the AWCP, as outlined in Army Regulation 600-9, is inconsistent due to the lack of standardized training. Irregularities often occur, especially relating to body fat measurements. The lack of mandatory standardized training often contributes to inconsistent execution of the AWCP at the unit level, creating discrepancies from unit to unit.

Recommendation: Create mandatory training for a command designated unit level AWCP manager with annual recertification.

ARMY FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Work Group II Force Support

Spokesperson: Rebecca Irwin

Top 3 Issues

1. Army Continuing Education System Education Counselor Authorizations
2. Improvements to Communal Kitchens in OCONUS Barracks
3. After Duty Hours Private Rental Housing Emergency Assistance for OCONUS DOD Personnel

Army Continuing Education System (ACES) Education Counselor Authorizations

Scope: Decreased Educational Counselor authorizations, as reflected on the ACES Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA), reduce the quality of education counseling available to Soldiers. In USAREUR, there are 42,000 Soldiers supported by five designated Education Counselors. Education Counselors assist Soldiers by providing valuable information for implementing a plan catering to the Soldier's specific needs in attaining promotions and career advancement. The existing Education Counselor to Soldier ratio has reduced the quality and quantity of educational counseling services for Soldiers' personal and professional development.

Recommendations:

1. Provide additional ACES authorizations for Education Counselors.
2. Authorize communities with increased Soldier population, due to USAREUR transformation, to absorb existing ACES TDA authorizations from closing Garrisons.

Improvements to Communal Kitchens in OCONUS Barracks

Scope: Kitchens in OCONUS barracks are frequently substandard for quality meal preparation. Some installations do not have Dining Facilities or hours may not be sufficient, requiring Soldiers to cook their own meals. Communal kitchens in the barracks are equipped with a sink, stove/oven, and countertop. However some of these kitchens are nonfunctional or do not exist on each floor. Substandard kitchens leave Soldiers with limited meal preparation options, negatively influencing proper dietary requirements and Soldiers' health.

Recommendations:

1. Equip all barracks with one communal kitchen, per floor, furnished with a stove/oven, refrigerator, countertop, microwave and sink.
2. Provide communal kitchens in all barracks at enduring and non-enduring garrisons, not scheduled to close within six months.

After Duty Hours Private Rental Housing Emergency Assistance for OCONUS DOD Personnel

Scope: There is limited after hours support for emergency situations in private rental housing throughout OCONUS for DOD personnel. In OCONUS locations where English is not the primary spoken language, an interpreter is necessary to resolve critical housing issues after hours. Italy has an after duty hours emergency service, with an on call representative, who provides the translation and housing expertise required to expedite problem resolution. An on call service for after duty hours housing emergencies will reduce family anxiety, potential for financial hardship and lost duty time.

Recommendation: Establish an OCONUS wide after duty hours emergency assistance service for private rental housing issues, based on the current Italian model.

ARMY FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Work Group III Healthcare

Spokesperson: Max Ferguson

Top 3 Issues

1. Restricted Reporting of Sexual Assault for DoD Identification Card Holders
2. School-Based Summer Resources for OCONUS Students with Special-Needs

Restricted Reporting of Sexual Assault for Department of Defense (DoD) Identification (ID) Card Holders

Scope: Military Family members, DoD civilians, and other DoD ID card holders are not afforded the opportunity for restricted reporting of sexual assault at Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs). Under the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SAPRP) AR 600-20, Chapter 8, only Active Duty personnel retain the option of restricted reporting. Restricted reporting allows victims of sexual assault to seek medical care and counseling without opening a formal investigation. Restricted reporting may increase the likelihood of victims coming forward and reporting the incident.

Recommendation: Authorize restricted reporting of sexual assault for all DoD ID card holders seeking services at MTF to mirror the provisions within AR 600-20, Chapter 8.

School-Based Summer Resources for OCONUS Students with Special-Needs

Scope: Special-needs children with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) attending Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS), who do not qualify for the Extended School Year program due to the stringent eligibility criteria, do not have access to suitable school-based summer educational and developmental resources. While Continental United States (CONUS) special-needs children have access to community and privately run scholastic opportunities, DoDDS students have little, or no, access to specialized services (i.e. speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy) due to Host Nation language barriers. Providing access to school-based educational and developmental resources during the summer enables more special-needs students to maintain progress towards their IEP goals during their ten week break.

Recommendation: Establish and implement school-based summer resources for DoDDS students with an IEP in order to provide continued educational and developmental services offered during the academic school year.

ARMY FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Work Group IV Employment and Education

Spokesperson: Jackie Ferguson

Top 3 Issues

1. Department of Defense Education Activity
Academic Policy for Interscholastic and Extra-curricular Activities
2. Military Spouse Preference Discretionary Use
3. Department of Defense Dependents Schools
Student Lunch Period

Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Academic Policy for Interscholastic and Extra-curricular Activities

Scope: DoDDS policy 01-EDUC-001 dated May 27, 2003 states “eligibility to participate in interscholastic/extra-curricular activities requires a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 and no more than one failing grade.” While interscholastic and extra-curricular activities are vitally important to the development of student character and responsibility, participation is a privilege and not a right. Research shows that in schools that have implemented higher academic standards, students adjusted positively to the new requirements. The established DoDDS policy promotes neither academic excellence nor student responsibility, sending the message that interscholastic and extra-curricular activities take precedence over academic achievement.

Recommendations:

1. Amend the current DoDDS policy to require a 2.0 GPA with no current failing courses for eligibility in interscholastic and extra-curricular activities.
2. Allow exceptions for students with “special needs” at the

Military Spouse Preference (MSP) Discretionary Use

Scope: Spouses are not permitted to choose when and if they invoke their Military Spouse Preference (MSP) when applying for continuing (permanent) positions. During the application process, spouses are automatically listed as MSP eligible instead of being able to choose whether to invoke their MSP. When military spouses accept or decline their first job opportunity, MSP is lost. The inability to use MSP selectively restricts the financial and professional goals of military spouses.

Recommendation: Allow military spouses to choose when to invoke their MSP.

Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS)

Student Lunch Period

Scope: The average DoDDS student lunch period ranges from 30 to 40 minutes. Even though the total length of the lunch period may seem adequate, the actual eating time is insufficient because of many logistical factors such as travel time to the cafeteria and lengthy lunch service lines. Students eat quickly, are unable to complete their meals and are often rushed through the cafeteria, resulting in unhealthy eating habits and potential hazards.

Recommendation: Provide no less than 20 minutes of actual seated eating time during the lunch period for DoDDS students to consume their lunches, regardless of space and staffing constraints.

ARMY FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Work Group V Family Support

Spokesperson: Kevin Irwin

Top 3 Issues

1. Same Day Hourly Child Care for Military Communities
2. Child, Youth School Services (CYSS) Child Behavioral Specialist Authorizations
3. Centralized, Worldwide Army Lodging Web-Based Reservation System for Army Knowledge Online (AKO) Customers

Same Day Hourly Childcare for Military Communities

Scope: Hourly care slots are reserved well in advance, leaving limited slots for same day child care for unexpected events such as medical emergencies, flex-work schedules, and volunteering. According to the Hohenfels Installation data sheet, in April 2009, clients were turned away 18 out of 22 days, leaving 39 children without hourly child care. Providing same day hourly child care enhances the family's ability to deal with unexpected situations and its ability to use military services (i.e., medical facilities, Army Community Service, and Soldier and Family Readiness Group activities), thus reducing undue stress and increasing opportunities for community involvement.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish hourly child care slots specifically available for same day reservations.

Child, Youth School Services (CYSS) Child Behavioral Specialist Authorizations

Scope: The Child, Youth School Services (CYSS) Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) does not include an authorization for a Child Behavioral Specialist. Based on preliminary studies and field reports by care givers and parents, many children in military communities exhibit increased social, emotional and behavioral issues. The transient nature and contractual limitations of the Military Family Life Consultants do not provide the stability or consistency essential to effective care. School counselors and school psychologists do not have consistent access to children under school age and children who are home-schooled or outside of the school calendar. Medical Treatment Facilities are not frequently utilized unless there is a referral from a specialist. The addition of a permanent, in-house Child Behavioral Specialist increases access to care for military children while reducing the strain on existing services.

Recommendation: Establish an authorization on the CYSS TDA for a Child Behavioral Specialist.

Centralized, Worldwide Army Lodging Web-Based Reservation System for Army Knowledge Online (AKO) Customers

Scope: A centralized Army Lodging web-based reservation system is not available. Customers are required to contact each lodge individually through phone, email or website to obtain reservations. Army Lodging is currently developing a Common Access Card (CAC) enabled Defense Lodging System (DLS) for Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) Army Lodging Facilities with a proposed deployment in fourth quarter fiscal year 2009. A centralized Army Lodging web-based reservation system with Army Knowledge Online (AKO) access would benefit customers by saving time and money and increasing use of Army Lodging facilities.

Recommendation: Implement a centralized, worldwide, web-based Army Lodging Reservation System accessible through AKO.

Most Critical Active HQDA AFAP Issues

1. #497, Distribution of Montgomery GI Bill Benefits to Dependents
2. #307, Inferior Shipment of Household Goods
3. #596, Convicted Sex Offender Registry OCONUS
4. #578, Paternity Permissive TDY
5. #620, Medical Entitlements for College Age Family Members
6. #621, Minimum Disability Retirement Pay for Medically Retired Wounded Warriors

Mobilization-Deployment Strengths

1. Landstuhl Hospital
2. Rest and Recuperation (R&R) leave
3. Warrior Transition Units
4. Additional pay and benefits during deployment
5. Medical care in theater
6. Army Community Service (ACS)

Mobilization-Deployment Challenges

1. Dwell time use for training/exercises
2. Increase in suicide rates
3. Soldiers charged leave for Rest and Recuperation (R&R)
4. Repeated deployments of Soldiers with critical MOS
5. Vehicle storage during deployment
6. Slow processing of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims

Top 5 Conference Issues

1. Restricted Reporting of Sexual Assault for Department of Defense Identification Card Holders

**2. Army Physical Fitness Test Requirements for Retention and
Reclassification of Current and Former Warrior Transition Soldiers**

3. Military Spouse Preference (MSP) Discretionary Use

4. Same Day Hourly Care for Military Communities

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**5. Temporary Duty with Return for Warrant Officer
Course/Officer
Candidate**

**5. Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA)
Academic Policy for Interscholastic and Extra-curricular
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